(c) if so, the time by which a post office is likely to be set up ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The criteria fixed for opening post offices in Urban areas are applicable to Metropolitan areas also. A copy of the norms for opening post offices in Urban areas is given in the Statement attached.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A post office at Saket, New Delhi-110017 has been opened on 15th July, 1997.

Statement

Norms for Opening Departmental Sub Post Office in Urban Areas

1. In urban areas, the Post Office should be initially self-supporting and at the time of the first annual review, it should show 5% profit to be eligible for further retention.

2. The distance between two Post Offices should not be less than 1.5 Km. in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above, and 2 kms. in other urban areas. If it is a Delivery Post Office, the distance from the nearest Delivery Post Office should not be less than 5 Kms.

   Heads of Circles have powers to relax the distance condition in 10% of the cases.

3. A Delivery Post Office in urban Area should have a minimum of 7 Postman's beats.

Representation of Women in Panchayats

322. SHRIMATI SARADA TADIPARTHI : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Panchayati Raj System giving 33 percent representation to women has not been functioning in a number of States;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to undertake a detailed study of the various problems being faced by women sarpanches in different States; and

(d) the other steps being made to ensure meaningful participation of women in Panchayati Raj system ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) and (b) As per the provision of Article 243 D of the Constitution, not less than one-third of the total number of seats and offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats are to be reserved for women. These are mandatory provisions which have to be complied with scrupulously.

(c) and (d) The working of Panchayati Raj Institutions including the participation of women sarpanches are reviewed by the Government of India from time to time and remedial measures to improve the panchayati raj system have been recommended to the States. Training of PRI representatives, with special focus on women is also being taken up for meaningful participation of women in the Panchayati Raj system.

[Translation]

Hampering in power production

323. SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHARY :
SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether power production is hampering due to the shortage of fuel;

(b) if so, whether the Government have taken any action to meet the shortage of fuel; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) There is no disruption in power generation due to shortage of coal. However, the coal stock position in respect of a few station becomes critical mainly on account of the inability on the part of the SEB's to make advance payment to the Coal Companies and Railways for supply and movement of coal under the new cash and carry scheme.

(b) and (c) For the new thermal power projects, Government is considering to encourage coal mining by private developers in addition to the increase in coal production by the Government owned coal companies.